

Testing Children for Lead Poisoning



Lead interferes with normal brain development. Already some 25,000 Virginia children have elevated levels of lead in their blood – mostly because they were exposed to lead-based paint dust found in older homes.

BEWARE. The younger the child, the greater the risk.

Why Test

- Protect children from impaired growth and development, lowered IQ, and behavior problems
- Required for children participating in Medicaid or WIC
- Requested by parent, guardian or health care provider

When to Test

- At 12 months and again at 24 months
- Between 3-6 years if not tested earlier

What Tests to Use

- Capillary test
- Venous test to confirm elevated capillary test

What Puts a Child at Risk

- Living in or visiting a house or child care facility
 - built before 1950
 - built before 1978 and renovated within the past 6 months
 - where someone has an elevated blood-lead level
 - where an adult's job or hobby involves exposure to lead (such as plumbing, welding, painting, fishing, using firearms, making stained glass or pottery)
 - located in a high-risk zip code (see www.vahealth.org/leadsafe)
- Living near an active lead smelter or battery recycling plant

What Parents Can Do

- Wipe feet before entering house
- Keep house dust-free
- Have lead paint removed professionally
- Do not store food in pottery with a high-lead content
- Call the toll-free, Lead-Safe hotline with questions: 1-887-668-7987